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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions in relation to the sixth periodic report of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Addendum

Replies of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

[Date received: 14 June 2018]

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Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework and definition of discrimination

1. In the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (LEOWM), pursuant to Council Directive 2000/78, the following articles: Article 2, Article 4 paragraph 1 items 2, 4, 5, 6, then Article 7, Article 20 paragraph 1, Article 22, Article 33, Article 36 are completely harmonized.

2. Directive 2002/73 provides harmonization of: Article 4 paragraph 1 items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and paragraph 2 thereof, as well as Article 18, Article 20 paragraph 1, Article 33 and Article 36.

3. Council Directive No. 2004/113/EC provides harmonization of Article 3 paragraph 2.

4. This Law is applied both in the public and in the private sector. Article 3 comprises the prohibition of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment based on gender, in the public and in the private sector in the areas of employment and labour, education, science and sports, social security, also including the field of social protection, pension and disability insurance, health insurance and health protection, judiciary and management, housing, public information and media, information-communication technologies, defence and safety, being and member and acting as part of union organizations, political parties, associations and foundations, other membership-based organizations, culture and other areas regulated with this Law or with another law.

5. On the basis of gender, this law defines discrimination, direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment.[1] Discrimination on the following bases: gender, race, skin colour, gender, being part of a marginalized group, ethnicity, language, citizenship, social background, religion or religious belief, education, political affiliation, personal or social status, mental or physical disability, age, family or marital status, wealth status, health condition or any other basis, is prohibited.[2]

6. The provisions of the Law that list the terms used in the Law regarding equal treatment, defining direct and indirect discrimination, gender-based harassment defined as 'undesired behaviour linked to the gender of one person, the goal or consequence of which is violation of the dignity of a person and creating a frightening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere', and gender-based sexual harassment, defined as '... any form of undesired verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature, the goal or consequence of which is violation of the dignity of a person, especially when creating a frightening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere' (Art. 4 paragraph (1) items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7). With the adoption of the new Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination, amendments and supplements are foreseen of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in terms of the bases for discrimination, i.e. the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity as bases for discrimination, and an inter-sectional discrimination will also be introduced as a separate form of discrimination.

7. The new Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination was placed in the phase of adoption by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, followed by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. The new proposed body of the Law adds sexual orientation and gender identity to the listed bases for discrimination. In terms of Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, the new text of the Law has been

[1] Article 4 items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (revised text, Official Gazette 201/15).

[2] Article 4 item 3 of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (revised text, Official Gazette 201/15).

harmonized with the said articles, i.e. the foreseen definition of discrimination as well as the law overall refer equally to all natural and legal persons, and no groups are individually separated. Gender-based violence is not covered by this law. See Item 8 regarding gender-based violence.

Access to justice

8. According to the data of the Ministry of Justice:

- In 2016, 9 requests for free legal aid to assist women who are victims of domestic violence were approved, and 2 were denied;
- In 2017, 16 requests were approved and 3 were denied;
- The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Bar Association, Notary Chamber, Mediator Chamber and Chamber of Enforcement Agents, organizes days of free legal advice for all citizens for issues related to mediation, attorney practice, notary practice and matters of enforcement, on a quarterly basis.

9. Pursuant to the Report on application of the Law on Free Legal Aid:

- In 2016, MKD 829,753.00 were paid out of the budget of the Ministry to 39 attorneys and 5 authorized associations who were involved in the procedure for providing free legal aid. 16.500 MKD were paid out to authorized associations for previously provided legal aid, and MKD 813,253.00 were paid out as attorneys' fees for providing legal aid;
- In 2017, MKD 1,386,297.00 were paid out of the budget of the Ministry to 30 attorneys and 6 authorized associations who were involved in the procedure for providing free legal aid. 26.400,00 MKD were paid out to authorized associations for previously provided legal aid, and MKD 1,359,897.00 were paid out as attorneys' fees for providing legal aid.

National machinery for advancement of women

10. Gender equality mechanisms have been established in accordance with LEOWM. The Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia plays a significant role in the structure of national mechanisms for gender equality.[3] Along with the Women Parliamentarians' Club, these bodies contribute to promoting equal opportunities for women and men in the decision-making processes.

11. There are coordinators and deputy coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men assigned in all ministries, coming from the lines of civil servants, who have obligations and responsibilities that are prescribed by law.[4]

12. Commissions for equal opportunities for women and men (as part of the local self-government councils, comprised of councillors with a mandate of 4 years) and coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men (civil servants, local self-government units' staff) have been established on a local level.

13. They all have the legal obligations to implement LEOWM, the strategic documents from the field of gender equality and incorporating the gender perspective in their strategic documents, strategic plans and budgets, on a national and local level.

[3] CEO was established in 2006 and it is consisted of Members of Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. Pursuant to LEO, CEO monitors the implementation of laws in the field of equal opportunities for women and men and non-discrimination, and, in that sense, it also monitors the implementation of strategic documents part of this policy.

[4] Articles 11 and 12 of the LEOWM.

14. State administration bodies and 20 local self-government units are involved in the process of gender responsive budgeting, which will become a legal obligation for all in the upcoming period.

15. In the period from 2007 to 2015, only funds that cover staff salaries were provided for the Sector for Equal Opportunities from the Budget of the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy. In 2016 and 2017, the budget was MKD 890,000. The budget for 2018 was reduced by MKD 510,000, hence MKD 380,000 were allocated for implementing the activities from the strategic documents. Most of the activities are implemented with the help of donor funds.

16. The members of the Commission for protection against discrimination are appointed by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, following an announced public competition. The Commission is an independent body functioning in accordance with the competencies prescribed by the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination. The principle for adequate and fair representation should be taken into consideration in the selection of members of the Commission.

17. In 2016, amendments and supplements were made to the Law on the Ombudsman, aimed at meeting the criteria for a Status A National institution.

18. The objective of the amendments was to:

- Make an alignment of the Law on the Ombudsman with the Paris Principles for National Human Rights Institutions, through: Introducing promotion of human freedoms and rights, enabling pluralism and strengthening the independence of the institution and the financial independence of the institution of Ombudsman. A pluralistic approach is introduced in the selection process of managing official of the institution, especially in the selection of Ombudsman Deputies. The Ombudsman position is announced publicly, i.e. it is regulated by making a public announcement for the Ombudsman and his/her deputies;
- Harmonization with the provisions of the OP-CAT, which will allow for further strengthening of the competencies of the Ombudsman as National Preventive Mechanism;
- Introducing the obligation for the annual report of the Ombudsman to also contain recommendations for overcoming the identified issue. The involvement of the Assembly and the Government is also introduced, for responsible actions pursuant to the recommendations of the Ombudsman as well as reporting on implementing the specific measures;
- Enabling an adequate infrastructure of the Ombudsman institution so it may perform its tasks. It is foreseen for the Ombudsman to make Annual employment plans in accordance with the law, without prior consent or opinion prescribed by law.

19. At the same time, the provisions are aligned with the recommendations of the European Commission.[5]

20. Whereas:

- The Ombudsman is authorized within his/her competencies to submit a request to the Standing Inquiry Committee of Civil Freedoms and Rights of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for examining cases of violation of constitutional and legal rights and taking measures. An obligation is introduced

[5] Pursuant to the recommendations of the Group of experienced experts on systemic issues regarding the rule of law in the Republic of Macedonia, related to the monitoring of communications and Urgent reform priorities for the Republic of Macedonia from the European Commission.

for the Commission for Protection of Human Freedoms and Rights to review the request of the Ombudsman for examining cases for violation of constitutional and legal rights and to submit a report, and for the Assembly to establish measures;

- Further regulation is introduced for the provisions for misdemeanour liability in cases of obstruction of the work of the Ombudsman, which will serve the purpose of strengthening the mechanism for implementation of recommendations of the Ombudsman;
- An additional mechanism is established to enable implementation of the special reports regarding obstruction of the work of the Ombudsman and for violation and failure to implement the requests, suggestions, opinions, recommendations and indications of the Ombudsman.

Temporary special measures

21. In regards to political participation of women, the Electoral Code has introduced a quota of 40 per cent participation in the candidate lists of the less represented gender, for MPs and candidates for members of councils of the municipalities and the City of Skopje. That means that for every three positions, at least one must be for the under-represented gender and additionally at least one position for every ten. See Item 12. In terms of Roma women, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has developed and adopted a National Action Plan for strengthening the position of Roma women in society 2016–2020, which contains special measures and activities that refer to Roma women. In regards to women from rural environments, a new National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development has been adopted, for the period 2014–2020, which contains a chapter on improvement of the position and the role of women from rural environments. In relation to the participation of women in active employment measures, see Annex 1.

Stereotypes

22. As correctional measures, within the scope of its obligation to monitor whether radio and television stations are adhering to legal obligations, the Agency has identified two instances of aired programmes that were aired in which gender equality has not been respected:

- In November 2017, it identified that three radio stations discriminated on the basis of gender, misogyny and sexism through a joint campaign intended for, as it was said, 'all over-emancipated women'. It informed the three media outlets of its findings, made an announcement in which it informed the public and sent a complaint to the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. The radio stations immediately ceased broadcasting the campaign. This campaign was a motive for the Commission for Equal Opportunities of the Assembly of Macedonia to hold a public hearing on November 16, on the topic: Hate speech in the media directed towards women, in which the Agency participated;
- In February 2018, it identified that in an informative programme on one national TV station opinions were stated, which present a stereotypical representation of gender and gender roles, specifically related to women and their marital status, which goes against the professional principle of equality of freedoms and rights, regardless of gender. The report was published and the media outlet was informed.

23. As far as the educational aspect is concerned, the Agency translated Recommendation CM/Rec (2017)9 of the Council of Europe on gender equality in the audio-visual sector, which was adopted in September 2017, in Macedonian and

Albanian language. It was presented to the media, the civil sector and other stakeholders in December 2017 and it can be accessed on the website of the regulation authority www.avmu.mk.

24. At the beginning of 2018, the Agency has created and promoted 2 TV and one radio advertisement from the campaign 'Sexism is degrading', the objective of which was to overcome sexism in the media. The advertisements were published on the website, on the Facebook profile and on the YouTube channel of AVMS and they were offered for broadcasting to the media. By the end of March, we received feedback that two national TV stations (one with subtitles in Albanian) and two local TV stations aired the TV advertisements, while one national and one local radio station aired the radio advertisement. They are still airing on a number of media outlets. On the YouTube channels, one of the TV advertisements has 780 views, and the other one has 721. The first one has 1003 views on the Facebook profile, and the other one has 496. The radio advertisement has been listened to 761 times on YouTube.

25. On March 1st 2018, the Agency presented the results from the Research of gender in television programmes in 2017, published in a three-language publication (in Macedonian, Albanian and English), titled 'Gender in television programmes — results from the research in 2017' (https://tinyurl.com/y9wfrezg).

26. On March 28 2018, another publication was promoted — 'Gender on television: A collection of annual research activities on the treatment of gender issues and the manner of presenting women and men on national TV stations (2012–2016), with comparable indicators' — published in Macedonian, Albanian and English language. At the same time, the findings from the meta-analysis were presented, which provide comparable indicators from the research activities 2012–2016 (wherever comparison is not possible), the analyses of the structure of employees in the audio-visual sector, research on the opinions of the audience about radio and television programmes and data on the gender structure of television ownership structures. This is the first analysis of this kind in Macedonia (http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Collecton-2012-2016.pdf).

27. In 2017, the Agency also performed its regular analysis of the structure of employees in the audio-visual sector, which also provides statistical data by gender and informed the stakeholders of the results.

28. The Agency also submits all of its analyses to the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, so they may be of help in the process of gender equality policy making.

29. Pursuant to Art. 6 paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 6/12 and No. 166/14), state administration bodies in charge of performing works in the field of education and labour, the institutions that provide education and professional training are obligated to conduct regular analyses of the content of the curricula and the textbooks from the aspect of promoting equal opportunities for women and men. To this end, an analysis was made of the curriculum and the textbook for Macedonian language for the second grade. The goal was to see to what extent stereotypical opinions are present in schools and to encourage the idea of inclusion of gender issues in the schools, which, as part of school activities, would contribute to overcoming traditional perceptions and prejudice about male-female roles and activities.

30. The analysis has shown that there is an emphasis on stereotypes of the role of women in their private lives in the textbook, by assigning positive values to them as homemakers, for taking care of the home and children, cooking as well as for attributes of kindness and sensitivity. Male characters are presented in the texts and illustrations mostly as part of public life, with professions such as doctors, dentists,

workers and teachers. One of the recommendations is to eliminate stereotypical representation of gender roles/professions and to encourage diversity, individuality, solidarity and creativity, regardless of gender. Male and female presence should be equally promoted, both in public life and in private life. The textbook should take into consideration aspects of where, how and why the experiences, achievements and contributions from women and girls are excluded from skills that are valued in society.

31. Despite the fact that there are no special measures that refer to support for women and girls who wish to choose non-traditional career paths, such as police and customs areas, female participation is significant.

Gender-based violence against women

32. In 2015 the Law on Prevention, Combating and Protection against Domestic Violence is the first special systemic law in this field, which promotes and establishes a complete and coordinated system for acting on a level of prevention, combating and protection of domestic violence through:

- Continuous measures taken by all stakeholders on a national and local level in the context of prevention of domestic violence, raising awareness and sensitizing the general and professional public;
- Raising the level of responsibility for urgent, due and efficient actions of professionals and institutions for prevention of domestic violence;
- Ensuring the necessary, efficient and effective protection of victims, in accordance with their needs and interests.

33. The Law on Prevention, Combating and Protection against Domestic Violence regulates responsible and due actions of institutions and associations, their coordination and cooperation for prevention and combating domestic violence and ensuring protection of the victims.

34. For successful implementation of the provisions of the Law on Prevention, Combating and Protection against Family Violence, five ordinances were enacted by competent authorities, which are the following: 2- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2- Ministry of Interior and 1- Ministry of Health.

35. These ordinances regulate the method of implementing and monitoring of measures for protection against domestic violence, the assessment of risks on the life and bodily integrity of the victim and the risk of the violence repeating, the manner of enforcement of issued interim measures for protection of domestic violence victims and members of their family and the method of enforcement of the interim measure for protection against domestic violence.

36. In 2015, a Protocol for cooperation between competent institutions and associations for protection and combating domestic violence was adopted. The Protocol for cooperation between competent institutions and associations for protection and combating domestic violence was enacted to ensure comprehensive and efficient taking of measures for prevention, combating and protection against domestic violence in the Republic of Macedonia, in accordance with national regulations for this field. This protocol provides efficient and successful cooperation of competent institutions and association for protection, assistance and support for victims of domestic violence, as well as providing treatment for perpetrators of domestic violence. The protocol regulates the types, manner and content of cooperation between the competent authorities in taking prevention, combating and protection measures for victims of domestic violence and taking legal measures against perpetrators of domestic violence.

37. The Law on Prevention, Combating and Protection against Domestic Violence foresees the formation of a National Coordination Body against Domestic Violence, with a five-year mandate. In 2017, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia has established a National Coordination Body against Domestic Violence. The Minister of Labour and Social Policy is the Chairperson of this body. Members of the National Coordination Body Against Domestic Violence are representatives from the following relevant institutions: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Science, Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia, Public Prosecutors' Council of the Republic of Macedonia, Ombudsman and civil association. With the Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention for prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), this National Coordination Body plays a major role in a comprehensive approach and multi-disciplinary response in tackling violence against women and domestic violence in the Republic of Macedonia.

38. Also, in 2017 the Republic of Macedonia ratified the Convention of the Council of Europe for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. After the ratification of the Convention of the Council of Europe for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, a draft National Action Plan was developed for implementing the Convention, which foresees adoption of a special Law on Gender-based Violence that will be in accordance with the Convention.

39. Apart from focusing on other matters, the Law on Family regulates marriage and family, marital relations and family relations and certain forms of special protection of the family. See Item 22.

40. In terms of the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence, a draft version was created, however with the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, it shall be harmonized with the Convention.

41. Article 186 of the CC refers to criminal action: Rape. Act of performing, i.e. constitutive elements of this criminal act are coercion and forced sexual intercourse. Coercion is performed by using physical strength and threat. Marital rape does not constitute a criminal act.

42. The Ministry of Interior conducts trainings related to gender-based violence of its staff, through experts in the specific area. In 2017, the training titled 'Hate crime' was organized for employees in the Public Safety Bureau. A segment of the training focused on issues of gender-based violence. The candidates for police officers, who are referred to basic police officer training in the Idrizovo Centre, also undergo a mandatory training, included in the curriculum, in the field of domestic violence. Simultaneously, we wish to point out that a 'Manual for police officers for providing gender sensitive services for supporting persons who have suffered domestic violence' is being prepared, which is expected to be promoted in May 2018, and a number of employees in the Ministry of Interior will be trained in accordance with it.

43. After ratifying the Convention of the Council of Europe for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention),[6] amendments and supplements were made to the Law on Social Protection in March 2018, wherewith extra-institutional protection was supplemented with a Centre for persons who are victims of trafficking in human beings and victims of sexual

[6] On December 22 2017, the Assembly ratified the Council of Europe Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

violence. Thus, a secure place was provided, where identified victims of these kinds of gender-based violence can be accommodated.

44. Internal documents related to the processes and procedures of referral, accommodation, stay, rules of conduct for the hired staff, protection protocol, etc. were prepared for the functioning of this Centre, in accordance with international human rights standards. Legal provisions allow this Centre to accommodate victims of trafficking in humans, nationals and foreigners with a temporary stay permit, as well as victims of domestic violence. The Centre can accommodate 5 persons, and the persons can stay for a period up to 6 months.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

45. The Unit for Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling Migrants (as of March 1 2018 — part of the National Unit for Combating Smuggling Migrants and Trafficking in Human Beings) of the Department for Criminal Investigations in the Section for Combating Organized Crime for Crimes of Trafficking in Human Beings, on the basis of Art. 418-a of the CL, has not submitted any criminal charges in 2017. For cases registered in previous years, a first-instance verdict has been made for one person, issuing an alternative measure — probation and a second-instance verdict has been made for one person, altering the first-instance verdict in the part of criminal sanction, and the defendant has been issued with an effective imprisonment for a period of two years.

46. For crimes of trafficking in children, according to Article 418-d of the CC, the Public Prosecutor's Office has filed three (3) criminal charges in 2017 for persecution of organized crime and corruption, against three (3) persons, Orders have been enacted for conducting investigative procedures for two (2) persons and an indictment has been made against one (1) person.

47. Namely, Macedonian MoI identified two victims of trafficking in human beings with the purpose of labour and sexual exploitation and twelve (12) potential victims identified amount illegal migrants, on the territory of Macedonia.

48. Also, MoI is acting in accordance with standard operating procedures for acting with victims of trafficking in human beings, where all measures and activities are foreseen that are taken by competent institutions in all stages of the procedure, i.e. from identification and referral, initial care and mid-term assistance, repatriation, reintegration, criminal procedure as well as informing and respecting the opinions and wishes of victims of trafficking in human beings, or acting in the best interest of the child.

49. With the purpose of successful tackling of trafficking in human beings, the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration made new strategic documents for the fourth time, which are the National Strategy and the National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration for the period 2017–2020, aimed at increasing the efficiency of institutions, both on a central and a local level, at the same time emphasizing high transparency and cooperativeness of the National Commission.

50. In 2017, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Department for Equal Opportunities, through the office of the National Mechanism for Referral for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings continued their cooperation with social workers from the Centres for Social Works (in 30 cities throughout Macedonia), labour inspectors, the Ministry of Interior/Unit for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration as well as the Centre for Persons Who are Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings with NGOs.

51. The list of nominated social workers has been renewed and the needs for additional training were analysed, the conclusions were that social worker are in need of training for identification as well as methods and techniques for conducting interviews with children who are victims of trafficking in human beings.

52. In 2017, MLSP/NMR coordinated a procedure for protection of 2 children who were identified as victims of trafficking in human beings (one 11-year-old boy, exploitation with the purpose of begging and one 13-year-old girl, sexual exploitation).

53. In accordance with the Law on Free Legal Aid, victims of trafficking in human beings are entitled to free legal aid. In December 2017, a list of attorneys was provided by the OSCE Mission who have conducted training for attorneys for free legal aid for victims of trafficking in human beings, together with the Association of Young Lawyers, who can be used in the future to represent victims.

54. As part of the Project of Horizontal Instrument for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Council of Europe, a report was made on the state of affairs in trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation and a one-day seminar was organized on this topic. Training was also held for labour inspector from the State Labour Inspectorate and a Manual for Labour Inspectors was developed for implementing indicators for identifying victims of trafficking in human beings and Standard Operating Procedures for handling victims of trafficking in human beings. At the same time, a Leaflet was prepared for informing about the right to compensation of victims of trafficking in human beings.

55. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, pursuant to priority activities foreseen in the reform Plan 3-6-9 of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, has initiated a procedure for forming mobile teams for identifying vulnerable categories, including victims of trafficking in human beings. Mobile teams are formed in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and civil associations in five cities: Skopje, Bitola, Gevgelija, Tetovo and Kumanovo.

56. The objective of these teams is improved identification through proactive steps in discovering and preventing trafficking in human beings. The role of these teams is to work with vulnerable categories of citizens, including victims of trafficking in human beings, identification of the assumed victim as a victim of trafficking in human beings, initial referral and establishment of identity, early risk assessment, providing information about the option to include the victim in an assistance and support programme, etc.

57. The Republic of Macedonia has made bilateral agreements for facilitating the cooperation regarding trafficking in human beings with Montenegro and Kosovo.

58. Article 191 of the CC refers to criminal action: Mediation in performing prostitution:

- Paragraph 1 foresees penalties for persons who recruit, lead, encourage or lures a person to prostitution or in any way engage in the hand-over of a person to another with the purpose of performing prostitution, and a penalty of imprisonment for a period of five to ten years is foreseen;
- Paragraph 2 foresees penalties for persons who allow other persons to use sexual services for a profit, and a penalty of three to five years imprisonment is foreseen;
- Paragraph 3 stipulates penalties for persons who organize the performance of actions listed in paragraphs (1) and (2) or who perform such actions in the process of committing domestic violence, where a penalty of imprisonment of 10 years minimum is foreseen.

59. A fine is foreseen if the act described herein is conducted by a legal entity and the real estate and objects that are used to execute the act shall be confiscated.

Participation in political and public life

60. In the parliamentary elections in 2016 there were 41 women MPs elected, out of a total of 120 MPs. In this MP mandate, the deputy Speaker of Parliament is a woman, 5 women are presidents of parliamentary commissions and 7 are deputy presidents of parliamentary commissions. There are 4 women ministers in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

61. On the local elections in 2017, out of 260 candidates for mayors, only 15 were women candidates, out of which 6 were voted for mayor (Tetovo, Bitola, Staro Nagoricane, Mogila, Makedonska Kamenica, Arachinovo). Out of 1388 councillors in local self-government, 415 women were elected as councillors.

62. In the personnel structure of the Ministry of Defence, the percentage of employed women — administrative clerks is 40 per cent.

63. There are 8.85 per cent women in the staffing structure of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia, out of which:

- 13.73 per cent are officers, 11.13 per cent are NCOs, 3.60 per cent are professional soldiers and 52.8 per cent are civil staff.

Table
Overview of the representation of women, by category of staff in the Army of the Republic of Macedonia: (overview 01.05.2018)

Staff category	*Total in arm (there are)*	*Women*	*Men*	*Percentage of women in arm*
Officers	896	123	773	13.73
Ncos	1 599	178	1 421	11.13
Professional soldiers	3 748	135	3 613	3.60
Civilians	398	152	246	38.19
Total	**6 641**	**588**	**6 053**	**8.85**

Table
Representation of women in the Ministry of Defence and the Army of the Republic of Macedonia who participated in peace missions: (period 2002–till present)

Staff category	*Women*
Officers	22
NCOs	62
Professional soldiers	34
Civilians	26
Total	**144**

Education

64. In the school year 2017–2018, according to the data of the Ministry of Education and Science in public elementary schools, there are 188810 pupils, out of which 91146 are female, 121617 pupils attend lessons in Macedonian, 60258 in Albanian, 6505 in

Turkish, 274 in Bosnian and 156 in Serbian language. In the school year 2016–2017 there were a total of 192715 pupils, 93384 of which are female. (The data are taken from SSO). Pupils in elementary education in the school year 2015–2016, divided by gender, ethnicity and language (Source: SSO).

	Total	*Macedonians*	*Albanians*	*Turks*	*Roma*	*Vlach*	*Serbs*	*Bosnians*	*Other*	*Have not declared*	*Unknown*
Female pupils	89 755	50 249	28 841	3 918	4 164	134	549	874	1 014	10	2
Macedonian l.											
All	119 550	102 549	777	2 571	8 571	284	1 081	1 557	2 122	36	2
Female pupils	58 285	50 205	389	1 262	4 063	134	482	736	1 002	10	2
Albanian l.											
All	59 437	–	59 199	1	205	–	–	10	22	–	–
Female pupils	28 491	–	28 380	–	98	–	–	1	12	–	–
Turkish l.											
All	5 591	–	150	5 434	7	–	–	–	–	–	–
Female pupils	2 729	–	71	2 656	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Serbian l.											
All	258	94	1	–	2	–	161	–	–	–	–
Female pupils	113	44	1	–	1	–	67	–	–	–	–
Bosnian l.											
All	283	1	–	–	–	–	–	282	–	–	–
Female pupils	137	–	–	–	–	–	–	137	–	–	–
Total	**185 119**	**102 644**	**60 127**	**8 006**	**8 785**	**284**	**1 242**	**1 849**	**2 144**	**36**	**2**

65. In terms of outflow of pupils in elementary schools, the situation is the following: In 2015-2016, a total of 2525 pupils dis-enrolled from school, of which 1206 were female, for reasons of moving to a different location 19771 pupils, 933 of which were female, 554 pupils discontinued their education, 273 of which were female. (Source: SSO) — realistically this data is required SECONDARY EDUCATION In the school year 2017–2018, according to the data of the Ministry of Education and Science in public elementary schools there are 70318 pupils, 33653 of which are female, 48555 attend classes in Macedonian language, 20418 attended classes in Albanian and 1345 pupils attended classes in Turkish language. In secondary education, in the school year 2016/2017 there is a total of 80295, 38330 of which are female. (Source: SSO) Secondary education pupils in the school year 2016–2016, grouped by gender and ethnicity (Source: SSO).

	Total	*Macedonians*	*Albanians*	*Turks*	*Roma*	*Vlach*	*Serbs*	*Bosnians*	*Other*	*Have not declared*	*Unknown*
Female pupils	37 267	23 448	10 601	1 299	613	116	399	409	380	2	–
Total	**77 625**	**47 650**	**23 028**	**2 849**	**1 420**	**227**	**776**	**797**	**872**	**6**	–

66. In terms of outflow of pupils in secondary schools in the school year 2015–2016, the situation is the following: 1328 pupils dis-enrolled from school, 462 of which were female, 1063 pupils in total, or 355 female, left for moving to a different

location or country, while 265 pupils discontinued their education, 107 of which were female.

67. Secondary education is mandatory for all citizens, including Roma, in accordance with the Law on Secondary Education, and the education is free of charge. For regular pupils, pursuant to the Law on Secondary Education, free transportation to schools is provided. For pupils with special educational needs, apart from transportation for the pupils, free transportation is also provided for their companions.

68. Pursuant to the Law on Pupils' Standard, for regular pupils there is an option for free housing in a dormitory.

69. In accordance with the Law on Textbooks for Elementary and Secondary Education, textbooks in public elementary and secondary schools are free of charge.

Enrolment of Roma Pupils in Secondary Education

70. Pupils from the Roma ethnic community can enrol in a public secondary school if they have up to 10 per cent less points than the number of points foreseen in accordance with the Competition for Adequate Curricula and if they meet the additional criteria for examination of the knowledge and skills in the respective school.

71. The project titled "Scholarship, Mentorship and Tutoring to Secondary School Roma Pupils" is implemented for the ninth year in a row. The project started its implementation in the school year 2009/2010 and continues this year as well. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund from Budapest. Project's general goal is through positive interventions to increase the mobility and success of the Roma pupils in first, second, third and fourth year from all state and private secondary schools in Republic of Macedonia. This project covers the scholarship pupils from approximately 84 schools and 28 municipalities throughout Republic of Macedonia.

72. New project's goal is through positive interventions to increase the mobility and success of secondary school Roma pupils from the public and private secondary schools in Republic of Macedonia as well as to provide academic and financial support for the same.

73. The project is developing in three phases, i.e. providing scholarships, mentoring and tutoring.

Measures to support the Roma people's secondary education

- In the school year of 2016/17, a total of 582 scholarships were awarded to secondary school Roma pupils, 244 of which were male and 338 female. Total number of outflow is 9 scholarship pupils, 4 of which were female;
- In the school year of 2017/18, a total of 736 scholarships were awarded to secondary school Roma pupils, 318 of which were male and 418 female.

Measures to support the Roma people's secondary education

- In the school year of 2016/17, a total of 73 scholarships were awarded to Roma students, 37 of which were male and 36 female. Total number of outflow students from the programme is 18 students, 8 of which were female;
- In the school year of 2017/18, a total of 90 scholarships were awarded to Roma students, 37 of which were male and 36 female. Total number of outflow students from the programme is 18 students, 52 of which were male and 48 female.

Higher education

74. In the academic year of 2016–2017 a total of 51820 students were enrolled, 28811 of which were female (Source: SSO).

Table
Students enrolled in first year for the first time, according to belonging to the ethnic community, 2016/2017

	Total	*Out of which females*	*Ethnic communities*								*Unknown*	*From other states*
			Macedonians	*Albanians*	*Turks*	*Roma*	*Vlach*	*Serbians*	*Bosnians*	*other*		
Total	**15 955**	**8 242**	**10 401**	**3 701**	**432**	**93**	**147**	**235**	**137**	**65**	**1**	**743**

75. Young people most often have negative attitude regarding the vocational education. Apart from the health care and economic and legal occupation, other occupations are less attractive for the young people. This is particularly important for vocational education and training programmes with shorter duration (2 or 3 years). Low valuation of these qualifications on the labour market contributes for the young people to enrol at technical programmes with the intention to continue the education. Strong economy can make the low qualifications attractive, but weak economy negatively affects their attractiveness among the young people, regardless of their gender.

76. There is one more phenomenon that contributes to getting the wrong picture of the young people's interest about the vocational education, regardless of their gender. For example, young people from both genders in smaller settlements do not have the opportunity to choose between gymnasium and vocational education or to choose vocational school according to their interest since in that settlement there is one type of vocational education only. These pupils can choose to travel or to stay in another place where there is a secondary school responding to their interests. In conditions of reduced financial power of the families, largest number of these young people decides to use the services of the school in their surrounding regardless of the fact that it is not their real interest. Such phenomenon adversely effects the transition of pupils to the higher education.

77. Most often these pupils perform selection of study programmes that do not correspond to the character of the secondary education they completed, but reflect their real interest to study. In the research conducted, part of the students and unemployed pupils confirmed the stated conclusion by their statements. Besides the positive measures undertaken to overcome this phenomenon (free transport, free text books, accommodation in dormitories, scholarships etc.) it is still present in the country. This actualizes the issue of the character in the secondary schools in the smaller towns in the country and the programmes accumulating low number of pupils.

78. In the direction of enrolment higher number of pupils in the vocational schools, the vocational schools themselves promote the offered vocations and profiles to the pupils in the last years of study in elementary schools and promote the future benefits of the selected vocation. With the purpose of enrolling male/female pupils in all vocations, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) does not allow reduction of the pupils' quota for enrolment in gymnasium education, health care and economic and legal and commercial vocation in which female pupils are enrolled the most. In this manner, MES encourages the female pupils to enrol in technical schools.

79. Good example is the enrolment of female pupils at SSCS Mihajlo Pupin Skopje at the electro-technical vocation which is known as typically "male occupation".

Employment

80. According to the data obtained from the research titled "Women on the Labour Market: Stereotypes and Challenges", in organization of FINANCE THINK, the Economic Research and Policy Institute Skopje, the main reasons of inactivity are the following: 34.5 per cent of women declared that the main reason of their inactivity is the household obligations and the care of children and elderly people. 17.4 per cent declared that they have health issues that prevent them to work or to seek for a job. Other two large categories are those who have lost their hope to find a job (declared by 16.3 per cent) and those who responded that they have never worked and believe that insufficiently qualified. However, these categories of inactive women who declare discouragement of job seeking should be a target of the public policies aiming at increasing the participation of women on the labour market. Undeveloped flexible forms of work and the distance of the workplace from home have very low significance. Contrary to the widespread beliefs, money that women receive from abroad is identified by only 3.3 per cent as a reason for inactivity.

Relative importance for any potential obstacle for activity

81. The most of the interviewed (60.3 per cent) agreed that the household obligations (including the care for children) are main obstacle of their activity. However, many women (55 per cent) say they believe they do not have the appropriate skills to qualify. Half of the inactive women agree that the lack of flexible work opportunities is moving them away from the labour market, while 45 per cent complained about the lack of facilities that provide care for children.

Conservative views of the inactive women

82. The study shows that inactive women have traditional views of gender roles that act as an important barrier to their labour market activity.

83. The 2012 Law on Minimum Monthly Wages determined the amount of the minimum monthly wage as well as the other issues related to the minimum monthly wage. The minimum monthly wage is the lowest monthly amount of the basic monthly wage that the employer is obliged to pay to the employee for work performed for full time and fulfilled normalized performance. The normalized performance is determined by the employer, each year in February, based on the criteria and efficiency of the production process. The normalized performance is determined by the employer in cooperation with the employees, on the basis of criteria that must be the same for each technical and technological whole at the employer. The normalized performance as a condition for payment of the minimum monthly wage should be achievable by at least 80 per cent of the number of employees for each technical-technological unit, separately. Right to minimum monthly wage have all workers at the amount determined by law. The amount of the minimum wage for a part-time worker or worker working less than full-time working hours, is calculated and paid in proportion to the number of hours worked. Minimum monthly wage does not apply to the employed persons solely. Pursuant to the 2012 Law on Minimum Monthly Wage, the minimum monthly wage amounted 8,050 in net amount for all employees except for the employees at departments in which in July 2011 there was an average monthly wage paid under 15,600 denars in gross amount. Pursuant to this law, the minimum monthly wage in the sectors of shoe, leather and textile industry was paid below the level of the minimum monthly wage.

84. The amendments to the 2017 Law on Minimum Monthly Wage contributed to increase in the minimum monthly wage to 17,130 in gross amount and is paid with no exception in all sectors, including the sectors of shoe, leather and textile industry. Pursuant to the amendments to the 2017 Law on Minimum Monthly Wage, a financial

assistance from the budget of Republic of Macedonia is being foreseen for payment of minimum monthly wage to employers that fulfil the requirements determined by the Law. Financial assistance's amount for payment of minimum monthly wage amounts 500–2000 denars. Pursuant to this law, the financial assistance of 500–2000 denars shall be paid from September 2017 to March 2018, while from March 2018 to August 2018, it will be paid in the amount of 50 per cent from the previously determined amount.

85. Article 108 of the Law on Labour Relations (Official Gazette 74/2015) stipulates the equal pay for women and men.

Health care

86. The working group established within the Ministry of Health has prepared a number of guidelines related to prenatal health care, including Guidelines for management of postpartum haemorrhage, detection of risky conditions in pregnancy, etc. The guideline is presented to the association of gynaecologists, it was approved and it is planned its implementation to start soon.

87. The health care of women in the reproductive period is provided through a network of health facilities at all three levels of health care. On primary level, prenatal health care in Republic of Macedonia is provided by gynaecologists, as well as by patronage nurses. Primary health care for pregnant women is carried out by gynaecologists and in 2016 a total of 141 doctors, or 1 doctor for about 3600 women, in the reproductive period worked in the public sector. The percentage of pregnant women who have access and use prenatal and postnatal care is relatively high and ranges around 90 per cent.

88. The deliveries with professional help are maintained at a high level (99.9 per cent).

89. The patronage service conducts patronage visits to the maternity home after leaving the maternity hospital. The number of pregnant women who have access and use postnatal health protection (visits from patronage nurses) amounts 83 per cent.

90. The Ministry of Health has introduced several measures to increase access to health care for pregnant women, especially to vulnerable groups of women experiencing financial barriers, that is, free examinations are provided during laboratory examinations during pregnancy, related to pregnancy, free childbirth for pregnant uninsured women, Roma women, women from socially vulnerable categories and persons without identification and free hospital treatment of infants from uninsured mothers, Roma women, women from socially vulnerable categories and persons without identification, while the pregnant women who have health insurance are exempt from paying for health services related to pregnancy, at all levels of health care. In 2015, the co-payment for health-care services during pregnancy was abolished (microbiological smears, laboratory blood and urine examinations, urine culture, PRISCA test for the detection of genetic anomalies), while the costs are covered by the annual programmes conducted by the Ministry of Health: the Co-Payment Programme of the MH (for insured women) and Mother and Child Programme (for uninsured women). This measure facilitates the access to these services of the vulnerable groups of women.

91. Health care for children aged 0–6 is provided by the preventive teams (monitoring of growth and development and protection against communicable diseases) and patronage services (support to families with young children for health promotion). The health care and treatment of sick children is carried out through the work of the general practitioners/paediatricians as well as the paediatric departments

within the hospital treatment. In 2016, the prevention teams conducted an average number of 2.8 examinations per infant.

92. The patronage service with patronage visits covered 80 per cent of the new-borns with an average of 2.2 visits per new-born and 4.5 visits per infant.

93. For the purpose of protection against infectious diseases in Republic of Macedonia, compulsory immunoprophylaxis and chemoprophylaxis is carried out in accordance with the Law on Protection of the Population against Infectious Diseases[7] and the Rulebook for Immunological Prophylaxis, Chemoprophylaxis,[8] Persons Subject to These Measures, the Manner of Performing and Keeping Records and Documentation).

Table
Percentage of children 1 year of age who received full immunization for tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio and measles

Vaccine year	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*
Diphtheria	95.9	94.7	98.2	95.4	91.3	95.3
Tetanus	95.9	94.7	98.2	95.4	91.3	95.3
Pertussis	95.9	94.7	98.2	95.4	97.3	95.3
Polio	97.0	96.9	97.9	95.6	92.1	95.3
Smallpox	96.8	96.1	96.1	93.3	88.8	82.1

Source: Institute for Public Health of Republic of Macedonia.

94. Within the Early Cancer Detection Programme, screening of women at the age between 24 and 60 is organized.

95. All gynaecologists (who have contracts with the Health Insurance Fund) are engaged in screening for early detection of cervical cancer. They are obliged to send invitations to women to be screened. Functioning of the mobile gynaecological unit is foreseen, especially for the rural areas where the most vulnerable population (unemployed, low educated, without health insurance, Roma, etc.) live. The activity is carried out by health institutions in cooperation with NGOs. The Institute for Public Health has produced educational material for motivating women to be involved in screening. IPH regularly prepares quarterly and annual reports and submits them to the Ministry of Health.

96. A working works on preparation of Clinical Guidelines for Screening Prevention of Cervical Cancer.

97. A special electronic registration form for the PAP smear has been prepared. The same will be operational after the protocol is finalized.

98. There are no gender-specific drug addiction treatment programmes in the country, women are treated in gender mixed programs that do not meet their needs. The number of female patients in the programmes is very low, up to 15 per cent of the total number of patients in the capital Skopje, while in some other cities this percentage is lower.

99. Pregnant women have always had treatment priority and there have never existed waiting lists for them.

[7] (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No. 66/04, 139/08. 99/09, 149/14, 150/15 and 37/16).

[8] (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No. 177/15).

100. In the manual with the protocol for use of methadone in the treatment of opioid addiction, women are recognized as a separate vulnerable category and it contains the chapters:

Use of methadone during pregnancy, where it is stated

101. Substitution maintenance therapies are well established for use in pregnancy and result in a general improvement in the physical and psychosocial well-being of mothers and a better outcome for their babies. Buprenorphine is associated with a lower incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome compared to methadone. Therefore, opioid addicted pregnant women can be treated with methadone during the first three months of pregnancy. If a decision is made to initiate methadone therapy during pregnancy, detoxification programmes and discontinuation of methadone therapy are not recommended due to the risk of adverse effects of abstinence syndrome on the foetus and on the course of pregnancy, but a stable maintenance of the daily methadone dose in the course of the entire pregnancy.

New-borns of opioid addicted mothers, where it is stated

102. "For more information, see a new-born infant's guide to opioid addicted mothers". In 2011, a Clinical Guideline for the Management of Children with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome was developed by a psychiatrist and paediatrician-neonatologist.

103. In most NGOs in several cities in the country there are specific programmes to reduce damage to sex workers who inject drugs. Most of these programmes offer medical and social services, legal assistance, and representation of a court in cases of violation of human rights.

104. In 2017 an assessment was made of treatment and care programs for drug users in which there are addressed, among others, all the challenges and recommendations related to gender issues in the drug-using population, and the evaluation report is available on the MH's website.

105. It is planned this year to draft a new law on termination of pregnancy taking into account the opinions and conclusions of the Human Rights Committee. The process is conducted transparently in coordination and communication with the non-governmental sector in order to provide appropriate solutions.

106. According to the programme of the Government of Republic of Macedonia, it is planned that at least one type of oral contraception should be placed on the positive list in the period of this Government's mandate.

107. According to the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–2020, the introduction of comprehensive sexuality education is envisaged.

Rural women

108. The formal employment of women in agriculture, forestry and water economy is 20.3 per cent of the total number of employed women in Republic of Macedonia, and according to the data for unpaid family workers — 64 per cent are women. Inequality in employment is most often the result of informal workforce, lack of land and/or ownership, traditional norms in rural areas and limited support for rural women in accessing resources (information, advisory services, subsidies, finance and skill development).

109. Reforms in education, legal regulation reforms and raising public awareness among women, starting with the education of young people from the youngest age, the role of notaries in realizing the transfer of real estate rights and increasing the

information of the contracting parties, by gradually overcoming the tradition/customs with the legal norms, result in an increase in the percentage of women enrolled as owners of real estate in Republic of Macedonia. For comparison, in Republic of Macedonia, the percentage of women enrolled as real estate owners from 16.63 per cent in 2015 has increased, and now it amounts 28.33 per cent.

Refugee women

110. The Law on International and Temporary Protection (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No. 61 dated 11.04.2018) in its provisions regulates the gender-sensitive procedures in determining the status of refugee or of person with status of subsidiary protection.

111. Namely, Article 6 line 1 of this Law, in acts of persecution according to Art. 1 A of the Geneva Convention regulates these issues by defining:

- Acts of physical or mental violence, including acts of sexual violence;
- Acts that by their nature are tied to gender or children.

112. At the same time in Article 7, in the section on reasons for persecution, the term "group" is defined, as well as the term "social group". Depending on the circumstances of the country of origin, a social group may also mean a group that is based on sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is not considered a crime punishable under the national law. Gender-related elements that include gender identity should be considered when determining a membership or characteristic of a particular social group.

113. The article on vulnerable persons as a category of persons provided for in this Law regulates gender violence and it reads as follows: "It is necessary to take into account the forms of gender-specific persecution in evaluating the application for recognition of the right to asylum."

114. The Asylum Sector has two women counsellors who are responsible for dealing with a vulnerable category of persons, since the gender-based violence as a harmful act against the will of a person based on socially prescribed differences between men and women includes physical, sexual or mental injury or suffering, threats of that kind, coercion and deprivation of liberty.

115. Regarding the reception of women refugees and asylum seekers, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy manages the only acceptance Centre in the country, the Public Institution for Admission of Asylum Seekers, located in Vizbegovo. In June 2016, the Ministry developed standard operational procedures for prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV) for the receiving facility, while in May 2017 SOP for the Reception Centre was integrated besides GBV, the entire mechanism for referral of vulnerable asylum seekers. Social workers are available 24/7 and have attended various trainings to provide protection and case management in relation to vulnerable individuals or to assess and profile the potential victims of violence. In collaboration with the UN agencies and partner NGOs, there are specific psycho-social programmes and assistance provided through various activities and group sessions.

116. In terms of transit Centres, through its social security workers, the ministry provides assistance and support to all migrants registered there by the police. Regarding women and girls, for the needs of transit Centres, the Ministry developed internal guidelines and a referral protocol for all vulnerable migrants and the identification of a victim of violence or human trafficking. In partnership with the UN agencies and the NGOs, transit Centres are used to offer specific psychosocial

programmes and group support, but with the reduction in the number of users, activities are also taking place with lower dynamics.

Disadvantaged groups of women

117. According to the 2014–2020 Strategy for Roma in Republic of Macedonia and the 2016–2020 National Action Plan for Strengthening the Position of the Roma Women in the Society, the following projects are implemented.

Project Inclusion of Children in Preschool Education

118. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund (REF) for eleven years implements the project Inclusion of Roma Children in the Public Municipal Institutions — Kindergartens.

119. The total number of children enrolled at all kindergartens in Republic of Macedonia amounts 34,521, 718 or 2.07 per cent of who are Roma. Outside the project (parents who cover the stay of children in kindergarten at the level of Republic of Macedonia), there are 204 children registered in total.

120. During the school year 2017–2018, a total of 510 children in the 19 kindergartens/municipalities were enrolled from the 628 planned for that period. In total 19 municipalities, 260 of them are girls. On average, the regular attendance of children in the kindergarten is about 65 per cent. According to the project statistics, the drop of children in kindergartens is on average 3.45 per cent, with higher outflows in male children of 3.32 per cent, while the outflow among the girls is 2.69 per cent. All children attending kindergarten have been regularly vaccinated.

121. Within this project, besides the obligations undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, administratively and financially, the kindergartens and 19 municipalities also support stay for a number of Roma children in kindergartens, for which they sign an agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Project Roma Information Centres

122. Currently, 12 Roma Information Centres are operating in 12 municipalities and 16 persons are engaged in the same, 5 of who are female. Roma Information Centres work on field, for timely information, counselling, referral and providing logistical support to the citizens in order to achieve their rights and obligations (in the areas of social protection, employment, health care, housing and education, obtaining personal documents, etc.), in a timely manner without particular problems and consequences. In the period from January to March 2018, 2354 services were provided, 46.5 per cent or 1095 services were targeted at women who addressed the RIC (in the areas of employment 92 services, social protection 626, 53 in the field of health care, in the area of education 67, housing 85, anti-discrimination 2, personal documentation 108, other 62).

Action for Registration of People in the Register of Births

123. According to the latest data, about 600 Roma face the problem of non-registration in the register of births and cannot exercise any of the rights provided by the laws in Republic of Macedonia. Within this activity, the main target is the Roma women and mothers whose children are not registered in the register of births.

124. From April 1st, the Office for Management of Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths published an Announcement inviting all persons who are not registered in the register of births to submit requests to the Officer for additional registration, thus Macedonia will have official figures for these persons recorded in a separate Register and at the same time will have an insight on what kind of cases it is about.

ROMAACTED

125. The new project ROMAACTED implemented in Republic of Macedonia will be founded by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The Council of Europe in cooperation with the European Commission has selected the coaches from this programme and an NGO that will coordinate the activities. In the formation of local structures, Roma women and their inclusion is of particular importance.

Measures for Temporarily Taking Care of the Persons Caught under Kale

126. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, acting on the conclusion of the Draft Minutes of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Government of Republic of Macedonia held on 5.10.2017, in relation to the obligation to accommodate the persons found under Kale in a social protection institution, undertakes measures through the PI Inter-Municipal Centre for Social Work of the City of Skopje for urgent and temporary accommodation in a facility in Skopje, which is under the authority of the Ministry. By the end of November 2017, 112 people were relocated from the place called POD KALE and placed in institutions that are under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Workshops are organized with the Roma women in the families and it is worked on raising their awareness. Of the 94 persons who are temporarily taken care of at the facility in Ranka Milanovikj, 53 are children (male 31, female 22), while 41 adults (21 male, 20 female).

Social Mapping

127. From April 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy started with the implementation of a new Social Mapping Project funded by the European Commission. This project will map the Roma settlements and provide qualitative and quantitative data to Roma people in the areas of education, employment, housing, health care, social inclusion, possession of documents and the like.

128. The Employment Service Agency of Republic of Macedonia have registered 6202 unemployed Roma who are active job-seekers, out of which 2324 women. The qualification structure of a large proportion of these persons is disadvantageous in relation to the needs and demands of employers, which actually reduces their employment opportunities, while the low level of education makes it difficult for many people to include them in some of the programmes and active measures for employment and successful management of the labour market.

129. Within the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Cabinet of the Minister without Portfolio, Mr. Aksel Ahmedovski, a Rulebook and criteria for allocation of projects for the municipalities were prepared, which would be financed from the national budget in the field of infrastructure. From this year, the budget of funds planned for this purpose has been increased.

130. Regarding the issue of housing locations, i.e. construction of housing facilities for socially vulnerable groups in the municipality of Shuto Orizari-Skopje, according to the F/P 1674 (2009) Project for Housing of Socially Vulnerable Groups, it is planned to build 51 apartments in two facilities, it is expected that the Municipality of Shuto Orizari will adopt the Detailed Urban Plan, which should be prepared as soon as possible by the Spatial Planning Agency of Republic of Macedonia.

131. The Ministry of Health continued with the implementation of the Roma Health Mediators Project (RHM).

132. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, within the framework of the information for overcoming the problem of non-registration in register of births,

proposed the preparation of a Health Care Program for these people with a special focus on Roma woman.

Marriage and family relations

133. Article 16 of the Family Law (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No. 80/92, 9/96, 38/04, 33/06, 84/08, 67/10, 156/10, 39/12, 44/12, 8/14, 115/14, 104/15 and 150/15) determines the age of entering into matrimony as marital obstacle where it does not allow for person under the age of 18 to enter into marriage. The same provision provides for an exemption so that the competent court can, in an out-of-court procedure, allow the marriage of a person who has reached the age of 16 if it determines that it has reached the physical and mental maturity required to perform the rights and obligations arising in marriage, after obtaining an opinion from a health institution and providing expert assistance in the Centre for social work. In the procedure for issuing a decision for granting permission for marriage, the court will hear the minor submitter of the motion, their parents, the guardian and the person to whom the minor person wants to marry.

134. The Centres for Social Work, when performing the activities within their scope, monitor the situation in the vulnerable families and undertake measures for preventing juvenile marriages through professional-methodological work with the parents and minors, as well as by indicating the consequences in the case of juvenile marriages, in order to prevent certain negative phenomena, to strengthen parental competencies and provide expert assistance to overcome broken partnerships and parental relationships in the family.

135. The SWC, as an exclusively competent body for guardianship, supervises the exercise of the parental right, and in case the parent abuses or neglects the parental right, it undertakes appropriate measures for protection of the person, the rights and the interests of the child (it may take the child away, place it in another family, institution or procedure for deprivation of parental right) their education, employment and health.

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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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List of issues and questions in relation to the sixth periodic report of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Addendum

Replies of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

[Date received: 14 June 2018]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework and definition of discrimination

1. In the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (LEOWM), pursuant to Council Directive 2000/78, the following articles: Article 2, Article 4 paragraph 1 items 2, 4, 5, 6, then Article 7, Article 20 paragraph 1, Article 22, Article 33, Article 36 are completely harmonized.

2. Directive 2002/73 provides harmonization of: Article 4 paragraph 1 items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and paragraph 2 thereof, as well as Article 18, Article 20 paragraph 1, Article 33 and Article 36.

3. Council Directive No. 2004/113/EC provides harmonization of Article 3 paragraph 2.

4. This Law is applied both in the public and in the private sector. Article 3 comprises the prohibition of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment based on gender, in the public and in the private sector in the areas of employment and labour, education, science and sports, social security, also including the field of social protection, pension and disability insurance, health insurance and health protection, judiciary and management, housing, public information and media, information-communication technologies, defence and safety, being and member and acting as part of union organizations, political parties, associations and foundations, other membership-based organizations, culture and other areas regulated with this Law or with another law.

5. On the basis of gender, this law defines discrimination, direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment.[1] Discrimination on the following bases: gender, race, skin colour, gender, being part of a marginalized group, ethnicity, language, citizenship, social background, religion or religious belief, education, political affiliation, personal or social status, mental or physical disability, age, family or marital status, wealth status, health condition or any other basis, is prohibited.[2]

6. The provisions of the Law that list the terms used in the Law regarding equal treatment, defining direct and indirect discrimination, gender-based harassment defined as 'undesired behaviour linked to the gender of one person, the goal or consequence of which is violation of the dignity of a person and creating a frightening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere', and gender-based sexual harassment, defined as '... any form of undesired verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature, the goal or consequence of which is violation of the dignity of a person, especially when creating a frightening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere' (Art. 4 paragraph (1) items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7). With the adoption of the new Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination, amendments and supplements are foreseen of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in terms of the bases for discrimination, i.e. the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity as bases for discrimination, and an inter-sectional discrimination will also be introduced as a separate form of discrimination.

7. The new Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination was placed in the phase of adoption by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, followed by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. The new proposed body of the Law adds sexual orientation and gender identity to the listed bases for discrimination. In terms of Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, the new text of the Law has been

[1] Article 4 items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (revised text, Official Gazette 201/15).

[2] Article 4 item 3 of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (revised text, Official Gazette 201/15).

harmonized with the said articles, i.e. the foreseen definition of discrimination as well as the law overall refer equally to all natural and legal persons, and no groups are individually separated. Gender-based violence is not covered by this law. See Item 8 regarding gender-based violence.

Access to justice

8. According to the data of the Ministry of Justice:

- In 2016, 9 requests for free legal aid to assist women who are victims of domestic violence were approved, and 2 were denied;
- In 2017, 16 requests were approved and 3 were denied;
- The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Bar Association, Notary Chamber, Mediator Chamber and Chamber of Enforcement Agents, organizes days of free legal advice for all citizens for issues related to mediation, attorney practice, notary practice and matters of enforcement, on a quarterly basis.

9. Pursuant to the Report on application of the Law on Free Legal Aid:

- In 2016, MKD 829,753.00 were paid out of the budget of the Ministry to 39 attorneys and 5 authorized associations who were involved in the procedure for providing free legal aid. 16.500 MKD were paid out to authorized associations for previously provided legal aid, and MKD 813,253.00 were paid out as attorneys' fees for providing legal aid;
- In 2017, MKD 1,386,297.00 were paid out of the budget of the Ministry to 30 attorneys and 6 authorized associations who were involved in the procedure for providing free legal aid. 26.400,00 MKD were paid out to authorized associations for previously provided legal aid, and MKD 1,359,897.00 were paid out as attorneys' fees for providing legal aid.

National machinery for advancement of women

10. Gender equality mechanisms have been established in accordance with LEOWM. The Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia plays a significant role in the structure of national mechanisms for gender equality.[3] Along with the Women Parliamentarians' Club, these bodies contribute to promoting equal opportunities for women and men in the decision-making processes.

11. There are coordinators and deputy coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men assigned in all ministries, coming from the lines of civil servants, who have obligations and responsibilities that are prescribed by law.[4]

12. Commissions for equal opportunities for women and men (as part of the local self-government councils, comprised of councillors with a mandate of 4 years) and coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men (civil servants, local self-government units' staff) have been established on a local level.

13. They all have the legal obligations to implement LEOWM, the strategic documents from the field of gender equality and incorporating the gender perspective in their strategic documents, strategic plans and budgets, on a national and local level.

[3] CEO was established in 2006 and it is consisted of Members of Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. Pursuant to LEO, CEO monitors the implementation of laws in the field of equal opportunities for women and men and non-discrimination, and, in that sense, it also monitors the implementation of strategic documents part of this policy.

[4] Articles 11 and 12 of the LEOWM.

14. State administration bodies and 20 local self-government units are involved in the process of gender responsive budgeting, which will become a legal obligation for all in the upcoming period.

15. In the period from 2007 to 2015, only funds that cover staff salaries were provided for the Sector for Equal Opportunities from the Budget of the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy. In 2016 and 2017, the budget was MKD 890,000. The budget for 2018 was reduced by MKD 510,000, hence MKD 380,000 were allocated for implementing the activities from the strategic documents. Most of the activities are implemented with the help of donor funds.

16. The members of the Commission for protection against discrimination are appointed by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, following an announced public competition. The Commission is an independent body functioning in accordance with the competencies prescribed by the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination. The principle for adequate and fair representation should be taken into consideration in the selection of members of the Commission.

17. In 2016, amendments and supplements were made to the Law on the Ombudsman, aimed at meeting the criteria for a Status A National institution.

18. The objective of the amendments was to:

- Make an alignment of the Law on the Ombudsman with the Paris Principles for National Human Rights Institutions, through: Introducing promotion of human freedoms and rights, enabling pluralism and strengthening the independence of the institution and the financial independence of the institution of Ombudsman. A pluralistic approach is introduced in the selection process of managing official of the institution, especially in the selection of Ombudsman Deputies. The Ombudsman position is announced publicly, i.e. it is regulated by making a public announcement for the Ombudsman and his/her deputies;
- Harmonization with the provisions of the OP-CAT, which will allow for further strengthening of the competencies of the Ombudsman as National Preventive Mechanism;
- Introducing the obligation for the annual report of the Ombudsman to also contain recommendations for overcoming the identified issue. The involvement of the Assembly and the Government is also introduced, for responsible actions pursuant to the recommendations of the Ombudsman as well as reporting on implementing the specific measures;
- Enabling an adequate infrastructure of the Ombudsman institution so it may perform its tasks. It is foreseen for the Ombudsman to make Annual employment plans in accordance with the law, without prior consent or opinion prescribed by law.

19. At the same time, the provisions are aligned with the recommendations of the European Commission.[5]

20. Whereas:

- The Ombudsman is authorized within his/her competencies to submit a request to the Standing Inquiry Committee of Civil Freedoms and Rights of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for examining cases of violation of constitutional and legal rights and taking measures. An obligation is introduced

[5] Pursuant to the recommendations of the Group of experienced experts on systemic issues regarding the rule of law in the Republic of Macedonia, related to the monitoring of communications and Urgent reform priorities for the Republic of Macedonia from the European Commission.

for the Commission for Protection of Human Freedoms and Rights to review the request of the Ombudsman for examining cases for violation of constitutional and legal rights and to submit a report, and for the Assembly to establish measures;

- Further regulation is introduced for the provisions for misdemeanour liability in cases of obstruction of the work of the Ombudsman, which will serve the purpose of strengthening the mechanism for implementation of recommendations of the Ombudsman;
- An additional mechanism is established to enable implementation of the special reports regarding obstruction of the work of the Ombudsman and for violation and failure to implement the requests, suggestions, opinions, recommendations and indications of the Ombudsman.

Temporary special measures

21. In regards to political participation of women, the Electoral Code has introduced a quota of 40 per cent participation in the candidate lists of the less represented gender, for MPs and candidates for members of councils of the municipalities and the City of Skopje. That means that for every three positions, at least one must be for the under-represented gender and additionally at least one position for every ten. See Item 12. In terms of Roma women, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has developed and adopted a National Action Plan for strengthening the position of Roma women in society 2016–2020, which contains special measures and activities that refer to Roma women. In regards to women from rural environments, a new National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development has been adopted, for the period 2014–2020, which contains a chapter on improvement of the position and the role of women from rural environments. In relation to the participation of women in active employment measures, see Annex 1.

Stereotypes

22. As correctional measures, within the scope of its obligation to monitor whether radio and television stations are adhering to legal obligations, the Agency has identified two instances of aired programmes that were aired in which gender equality has not been respected:

- In November 2017, it identified that three radio stations discriminated on the basis of gender, misogyny and sexism through a joint campaign intended for, as it was said, 'all over-emancipated women'. It informed the three media outlets of its findings, made an announcement in which it informed the public and sent a complaint to the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. The radio stations immediately ceased broadcasting the campaign. This campaign was a motive for the Commission for Equal Opportunities of the Assembly of Macedonia to hold a public hearing on November 16, on the topic: Hate speech in the media directed towards women, in which the Agency participated;
- In February 2018, it identified that in an informative programme on one national TV station opinions were stated, which present a stereotypical representation of gender and gender roles, specifically related to women and their marital status, which goes against the professional principle of equality of freedoms and rights, regardless of gender. The report was published and the media outlet was informed.

23. As far as the educational aspect is concerned, the Agency translated Recommendation CM/Rec (2017)9 of the Council of Europe on gender equality in the audio-visual sector, which was adopted in September 2017, in Macedonian and

Albanian language. It was presented to the media, the civil sector and other stakeholders in December 2017 and it can be accessed on the website of the regulation authority www.avmu.mk.

24. At the beginning of 2018, the Agency has created and promoted 2 TV and one radio advertisement from the campaign 'Sexism is degrading', the objective of which was to overcome sexism in the media. The advertisements were published on the website, on the Facebook profile and on the YouTube channel of AVMS and they were offered for broadcasting to the media. By the end of March, we received feedback that two national TV stations (one with subtitles in Albanian) and two local TV stations aired the TV advertisements, while one national and one local radio station aired the radio advertisement. They are still airing on a number of media outlets. On the YouTube channels, one of the TV advertisements has 780 views, and the other one has 721. The first one has 1003 views on the Facebook profile, and the other one has 496. The radio advertisement has been listened to 761 times on YouTube.

25. On March 1st 2018, the Agency presented the results from the Research of gender in television programmes in 2017, published in a three-language publication (in Macedonian, Albanian and English), titled 'Gender in television programmes — results from the research in 2017' (https://tinyurl.com/y9wfrezg).

26. On March 28 2018, another publication was promoted — 'Gender on television: A collection of annual research activities on the treatment of gender issues and the manner of presenting women and men on national TV stations (2012–2016), with comparable indicators' — published in Macedonian, Albanian and English language. At the same time, the findings from the meta-analysis were presented, which provide comparable indicators from the research activities 2012–2016 (wherever comparison is not possible), the analyses of the structure of employees in the audio-visual sector, research on the opinions of the audience about radio and television programmes and data on the gender structure of television ownership structures. This is the first analysis of this kind in Macedonia (http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Collecton-2012-2016.pdf).

27. In 2017, the Agency also performed its regular analysis of the structure of employees in the audio-visual sector, which also provides statistical data by gender and informed the stakeholders of the results.

28. The Agency also submits all of its analyses to the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, so they may be of help in the process of gender equality policy making.

29. Pursuant to Art. 6 paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 6/12 and No. 166/14), state administration bodies in charge of performing works in the field of education and labour, the institutions that provide education and professional training are obligated to conduct regular analyses of the content of the curricula and the textbooks from the aspect of promoting equal opportunities for women and men. To this end, an analysis was made of the curriculum and the textbook for Macedonian language for the second grade. The goal was to see to what extent stereotypical opinions are present in schools and to encourage the idea of inclusion of gender issues in the schools, which, as part of school activities, would contribute to overcoming traditional perceptions and prejudice about male-female roles and activities.

30. The analysis has shown that there is an emphasis on stereotypes of the role of women in their private lives in the textbook, by assigning positive values to them as homemakers, for taking care of the home and children, cooking as well as for attributes of kindness and sensitivity. Male characters are presented in the texts and illustrations mostly as part of public life, with professions such as doctors, dentists,

workers and teachers. One of the recommendations is to eliminate stereotypical representation of gender roles/professions and to encourage diversity, individuality, solidarity and creativity, regardless of gender. Male and female presence should be equally promoted, both in public life and in private life. The textbook should take into consideration aspects of where, how and why the experiences, achievements and contributions from women and girls are excluded from skills that are valued in society.

31. Despite the fact that there are no special measures that refer to support for women and girls who wish to choose non-traditional career paths, such as police and customs areas, female participation is significant.

Gender-based violence against women

32. In 2015 the Law on Prevention, Combating and Protection against Domestic Violence is the first special systemic law in this field, which promotes and establishes a complete and coordinated system for acting on a level of prevention, combating and protection of domestic violence through:

- Continuous measures taken by all stakeholders on a national and local level in the context of prevention of domestic violence, raising awareness and sensitizing the general and professional public;
- Raising the level of responsibility for urgent, due and efficient actions of professionals and institutions for prevention of domestic violence;
- Ensuring the necessary, efficient and effective protection of victims, in accordance with their needs and interests.

33. The Law on Prevention, Combating and Protection against Domestic Violence regulates responsible and due actions of institutions and associations, their coordination and cooperation for prevention and combating domestic violence and ensuring protection of the victims.

34. For successful implementation of the provisions of the Law on Prevention, Combating and Protection against Family Violence, five ordinances were enacted by competent authorities, which are the following: 2- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2- Ministry of Interior and 1- Ministry of Health.

35. These ordinances regulate the method of implementing and monitoring of measures for protection against domestic violence, the assessment of risks on the life and bodily integrity of the victim and the risk of the violence repeating, the manner of enforcement of issued interim measures for protection of domestic violence victims and members of their family and the method of enforcement of the interim measure for protection against domestic violence.

36. In 2015, a Protocol for cooperation between competent institutions and associations for protection and combating domestic violence was adopted. The Protocol for cooperation between competent institutions and associations for protection and combating domestic violence was enacted to ensure comprehensive and efficient taking of measures for prevention, combating and protection against domestic violence in the Republic of Macedonia, in accordance with national regulations for this field. This protocol provides efficient and successful cooperation of competent institutions and association for protection, assistance and support for victims of domestic violence, as well as providing treatment for perpetrators of domestic violence. The protocol regulates the types, manner and content of cooperation between the competent authorities in taking prevention, combating and protection measures for victims of domestic violence and taking legal measures against perpetrators of domestic violence.

37. The Law on Prevention, Combating and Protection against Domestic Violence foresees the formation of a National Coordination Body against Domestic Violence, with a five-year mandate. In 2017, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia has established a National Coordination Body against Domestic Violence. The Minister of Labour and Social Policy is the Chairperson of this body. Members of the National Coordination Body Against Domestic Violence are representatives from the following relevant institutions: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Science, Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia, Public Prosecutors' Council of the Republic of Macedonia, Ombudsman and civil association. With the Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention for prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), this National Coordination Body plays a major role in a comprehensive approach and multi-disciplinary response in tackling violence against women and domestic violence in the Republic of Macedonia.

38. Also, in 2017 the Republic of Macedonia ratified the Convention of the Council of Europe for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. After the ratification of the Convention of the Council of Europe for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, a draft National Action Plan was developed for implementing the Convention, which foresees adoption of a special Law on Gender-based Violence that will be in accordance with the Convention.

39. Apart from focusing on other matters, the Law on Family regulates marriage and family, marital relations and family relations and certain forms of special protection of the family. See Item 22.

40. In terms of the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence, a draft version was created, however with the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, it shall be harmonized with the Convention.

41. Article 186 of the CC refers to criminal action: Rape. Act of performing, i.e. constitutive elements of this criminal act are coercion and forced sexual intercourse. Coercion is performed by using physical strength and threat. Marital rape does not constitute a criminal act.

42. The Ministry of Interior conducts trainings related to gender-based violence of its staff, through experts in the specific area. In 2017, the training titled 'Hate crime' was organized for employees in the Public Safety Bureau. A segment of the training focused on issues of gender-based violence. The candidates for police officers, who are referred to basic police officer training in the Idrizovo Centre, also undergo a mandatory training, included in the curriculum, in the field of domestic violence. Simultaneously, we wish to point out that a 'Manual for police officers for providing gender sensitive services for supporting persons who have suffered domestic violence' is being prepared, which is expected to be promoted in May 2018, and a number of employees in the Ministry of Interior will be trained in accordance with it.

43. After ratifying the Convention of the Council of Europe for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention),[6] amendments and supplements were made to the Law on Social Protection in March 2018, wherewith extra-institutional protection was supplemented with a Centre for persons who are victims of trafficking in human beings and victims of sexual

[6] On December 22 2017, the Assembly ratified the Council of Europe Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

violence. Thus, a secure place was provided, where identified victims of these kinds of gender-based violence can be accommodated.

44. Internal documents related to the processes and procedures of referral, accommodation, stay, rules of conduct for the hired staff, protection protocol, etc. were prepared for the functioning of this Centre, in accordance with international human rights standards. Legal provisions allow this Centre to accommodate victims of trafficking in humans, nationals and foreigners with a temporary stay permit, as well as victims of domestic violence. The Centre can accommodate 5 persons, and the persons can stay for a period up to 6 months.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

45. The Unit for Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling Migrants (as of March 1 2018 — part of the National Unit for Combating Smuggling Migrants and Trafficking in Human Beings) of the Department for Criminal Investigations in the Section for Combating Organized Crime for Crimes of Trafficking in Human Beings, on the basis of Art. 418-a of the CL, has not submitted any criminal charges in 2017. For cases registered in previous years, a first-instance verdict has been made for one person, issuing an alternative measure — probation and a second-instance verdict has been made for one person, altering the first-instance verdict in the part of criminal sanction, and the defendant has been issued with an effective imprisonment for a period of two years.

46. For crimes of trafficking in children, according to Article 418-d of the CC, the Public Prosecutor's Office has filed three (3) criminal charges in 2017 for persecution of organized crime and corruption, against three (3) persons, Orders have been enacted for conducting investigative procedures for two (2) persons and an indictment has been made against one (1) person.

47. Namely, Macedonian MoI identified two victims of trafficking in human beings with the purpose of labour and sexual exploitation and twelve (12) potential victims identified amount illegal migrants, on the territory of Macedonia.

48. Also, MoI is acting in accordance with standard operating procedures for acting with victims of trafficking in human beings, where all measures and activities are foreseen that are taken by competent institutions in all stages of the procedure, i.e. from identification and referral, initial care and mid-term assistance, repatriation, reintegration, criminal procedure as well as informing and respecting the opinions and wishes of victims of trafficking in human beings, or acting in the best interest of the child.

49. With the purpose of successful tackling of trafficking in human beings, the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration made new strategic documents for the fourth time, which are the National Strategy and the National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration for the period 2017–2020, aimed at increasing the efficiency of institutions, both on a central and a local level, at the same time emphasizing high transparency and cooperativeness of the National Commission.

50. In 2017, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Department for Equal Opportunities, through the office of the National Mechanism for Referral for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings continued their cooperation with social workers from the Centres for Social Works (in 30 cities throughout Macedonia), labour inspectors, the Ministry of Interior/Unit for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration as well as the Centre for Persons Who are Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings with NGOs.

51. The list of nominated social workers has been renewed and the needs for additional training were analysed, the conclusions were that social worker are in need of training for identification as well as methods and techniques for conducting interviews with children who are victims of trafficking in human beings.

52. In 2017, MLSP/NMR coordinated a procedure for protection of 2 children who were identified as victims of trafficking in human beings (one 11-year-old boy, exploitation with the purpose of begging and one 13-year-old girl, sexual exploitation).

53. In accordance with the Law on Free Legal Aid, victims of trafficking in human beings are entitled to free legal aid. In December 2017, a list of attorneys was provided by the OSCE Mission who have conducted training for attorneys for free legal aid for victims of trafficking in human beings, together with the Association of Young Lawyers, who can be used in the future to represent victims.

54. As part of the Project of Horizontal Instrument for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Council of Europe, a report was made on the state of affairs in trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation and a one-day seminar was organized on this topic. Training was also held for labour inspector from the State Labour Inspectorate and a Manual for Labour Inspectors was developed for implementing indicators for identifying victims of trafficking in human beings and Standard Operating Procedures for handling victims of trafficking in human beings. At the same time, a Leaflet was prepared for informing about the right to compensation of victims of trafficking in human beings.

55. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, pursuant to priority activities foreseen in the reform Plan 3-6-9 of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, has initiated a procedure for forming mobile teams for identifying vulnerable categories, including victims of trafficking in human beings. Mobile teams are formed in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and civil associations in five cities: Skopje, Bitola, Gevgelija, Tetovo and Kumanovo.

56. The objective of these teams is improved identification through proactive steps in discovering and preventing trafficking in human beings. The role of these teams is to work with vulnerable categories of citizens, including victims of trafficking in human beings, identification of the assumed victim as a victim of trafficking in human beings, initial referral and establishment of identity, early risk assessment, providing information about the option to include the victim in an assistance and support programme, etc.

57. The Republic of Macedonia has made bilateral agreements for facilitating the cooperation regarding trafficking in human beings with Montenegro and Kosovo.

58. Article 191 of the CC refers to criminal action: Mediation in performing prostitution:

- Paragraph 1 foresees penalties for persons who recruit, lead, encourage or lures a person to prostitution or in any way engage in the hand-over of a person to another with the purpose of performing prostitution, and a penalty of imprisonment for a period of five to ten years is foreseen;
- Paragraph 2 foresees penalties for persons who allow other persons to use sexual services for a profit, and a penalty of three to five years imprisonment is foreseen;
- Paragraph 3 stipulates penalties for persons who organize the performance of actions listed in paragraphs (1) and (2) or who perform such actions in the process of committing domestic violence, where a penalty of imprisonment of 10 years minimum is foreseen.

59. A fine is foreseen if the act described herein is conducted by a legal entity and the real estate and objects that are used to execute the act shall be confiscated.

Participation in political and public life

60. In the parliamentary elections in 2016 there were 41 women MPs elected, out of a total of 120 MPs. In this MP mandate, the deputy Speaker of Parliament is a woman, 5 women are presidents of parliamentary commissions and 7 are deputy presidents of parliamentary commissions. There are 4 women ministers in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

61. On the local elections in 2017, out of 260 candidates for mayors, only 15 were women candidates, out of which 6 were voted for mayor (Tetovo, Bitola, Staro Nagoricane, Mogila, Makedonska Kamenica, Arachinovo). Out of 1388 councillors in local self-government, 415 women were elected as councillors.

62. In the personnel structure of the Ministry of Defence, the percentage of employed women — administrative clerks is 40 per cent.

63. There are 8.85 per cent women in the staffing structure of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia, out of which:

- 13.73 per cent are officers, 11.13 per cent are NCOs, 3.60 per cent are professional soldiers and 52.8 per cent are civil staff.

Table
Overview of the representation of women, by category of staff in the Army of the Republic of Macedonia: (overview 01.05.2018)

Staff category	*Total in arm (there are)*	*Women*	*Men*	*Percentage of women in arm*
Officers	896	123	773	13.73
Ncos	1 599	178	1 421	11.13
Professional soldiers	3 748	135	3 613	3.60
Civilians	398	152	246	38.19
Total	**6 641**	**588**	**6 053**	**8.85**

Table
Representation of women in the Ministry of Defence and the Army of the Republic of Macedonia who participated in peace missions: (period 2002–till present)

Staff category	*Women*
Officers	22
NCOs	62
Professional soldiers	34
Civilians	26
Total	**144**

Education

64. In the school year 2017–2018, according to the data of the Ministry of Education and Science in public elementary schools, there are 188810 pupils, out of which 91146 are female, 121617 pupils attend lessons in Macedonian, 60258 in Albanian, 6505 in

Turkish, 274 in Bosnian and 156 in Serbian language. In the school year 2016–2017 there were a total of 192715 pupils, 93384 of which are female. (The data are taken from SSO). Pupils in elementary education in the school year 2015–2016, divided by gender, ethnicity and language (Source: SSO).

	Total	*Macedonians*	*Albanians*	*Turks*	*Roma*	*Vlach*	*Serbs*	*Bosnians*	*Other*	*Have not declared*	*Unknown*
Female pupils	89 755	50 249	28 841	3 918	4 164	134	549	874	1 014	10	2
Macedonian l.											
All	119 550	102 549	777	2 571	8 571	284	1 081	1 557	2 122	36	2
Female pupils	58 285	50 205	389	1 262	4 063	134	482	736	1 002	10	2
Albanian l.											
All	59 437	–	59 199	1	205	–	–	10	22	–	–
Female pupils	28 491	–	28 380	–	98	–	–	1	12	–	–
Turkish l.											
All	5 591	–	150	5 434	7	–	–	–	–	–	–
Female pupils	2 729	–	71	2 656	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Serbian l.											
All	258	94	1	–	2	–	161	–	–	–	–
Female pupils	113	44	1	–	1	–	67	–	–	–	–
Bosnian l.											
All	283	1	–	–	–	–	–	282	–	–	–
Female pupils	137	–	–	–	–	–	–	137	–	–	–
Total	**185 119**	**102 644**	**60 127**	**8 006**	**8 785**	**284**	**1 242**	**1 849**	**2 144**	**36**	**2**

65. In terms of outflow of pupils in elementary schools, the situation is the following: In 2015–2016, a total of 2525 pupils dis-enrolled from school, of which 1206 were female, for reasons of moving to a different location 19771 pupils, 933 of which were female, 554 pupils discontinued their education, 273 of which were female. (Source: SSO) SECONDARY EDUCATION In the school year 2017–2018, according to the data of the Ministry of Education and Science in public elementary schools there are 70318 pupils, 33653 of which are female, 48555 attend classes in Macedonian language, 20418 attended classes in Albanian and 1345 pupils attended classes in Turkish language. In secondary education, in the school year 2016/2017 there is a total of 80295, 38330 of which are female. (Source: SSO) Secondary education pupils in the school year 2016–2016, grouped by gender and ethnicity (Source: SSO).

	Total	*Macedonians*	*Albanians*	*Turks*	*Roma*	*Vlach*	*Serbs*	*Bosnians*	*Other*	*Have not declared*	*Unknown*
Female pupils	37 267	23 448	10 601	1 299	613	116	399	409	380	2	–
Total	**77 625**	**47 650**	**23 028**	**2 849**	**1 420**	**227**	**776**	**797**	**872**	**6**	–

66. In terms of outflow of pupils in secondary schools in the school year 2015-2016, the situation is the following: 1328 pupils dis-enrolled from school, 462 of which were female, 1063 pupils in total, or 355 female, left for moving to a different location or country, while 265 pupils discontinued their education, 107 of which were female.

67. Secondary education is mandatory for all citizens, including Roma, in accordance with the Law on Secondary Education, and the education is free of charge. For regular pupils, pursuant to the Law on Secondary Education, free transportation to schools is provided. For pupils with special educational needs, apart from transportation for the pupils, free transportation is also provided for their companions.

68. Pursuant to the Law on Pupils' Standard, for regular pupils there is an option for free housing in a dormitory.

69. In accordance with the Law on Textbooks for Elementary and Secondary Education, textbooks in public elementary and secondary schools are free of charge.

Enrolment of Roma Pupils in Secondary Education

70. Pupils from the Roma ethnic community can enrol in a public secondary school if they have up to 10 per cent less points than the number of points foreseen in accordance with the Competition for Adequate Curricula and if they meet the additional criteria for examination of the knowledge and skills in the respective school.

71. The project titled "Scholarship, Mentorship and Tutoring to Secondary School Roma Pupils" is implemented for the ninth year in a row. The project started its implementation in the school year 2009/2010 and continues this year as well. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund from Budapest. Project's general goal is through positive interventions to increase the mobility and success of the Roma pupils in first, second, third and fourth year from all state and private secondary schools in Republic of Macedonia. This project covers the scholarship pupils from approximately 84 schools and 28 municipalities throughout Republic of Macedonia.

72. New project's goal is through positive interventions to increase the mobility and success of secondary school Roma pupils from the public and private secondary schools in Republic of Macedonia as well as to provide academic and financial support for the same.

73. The project is developing in three phases, i.e. providing scholarships, mentoring and tutoring.

Measures to support the Roma people's secondary education

- In the school year of 2016/17, a total of 582 scholarships were awarded to secondary school Roma pupils, 244 of which were male and 338 female. Total number of outflow is 9 scholarship pupils, 4 of which were female;
- In the school year of 2017/18, a total of 736 scholarships were awarded to secondary school Roma pupils, 318 of which were male and 418 female.

Measures to support the Roma people's higher education

- In the school year of 2016/17, a total of 73 scholarships were awarded to Roma students, 37 of which were male and 36 female. Total number of outflow students from the programme is 17 students, 10 of which were male and 7 female;
- In the school year of 2017/18, a total of 90 scholarships were awarded to Roma students, 46 of which were male and 44 female. At this time we still do not have the exact number of outflow students, since the academic year will end in October 2018.

Higher education

74. In the academic year of 2016–2017 a total of 51820 students were enrolled, 28811 of which were female (Source: SSO).

Table
Students enrolled in first year for the first time, according to belonging to the ethnic community, 2016/2017

	Total	*Out of which females*	*Ethnic communities*								*Unknown*	*From other states*
			Macedonians	*Albanians*	*Turks*	*Roma*	*Vlach*	*Serbians*	*Bosnians*	*other*		
Total	**15 955**	**8 242**	**10 401**	**3 701**	**432**	**93**	**147**	**235**	**137**	**65**	**1**	**743**

75. Young people most often have negative attitude regarding the vocational education. Apart from the health care and economic and legal occupation, other occupations are less attractive for the young people. This is particularly important for vocational education and training programmes with shorter duration (2 or 3 years). Low valuation of these qualifications on the labour market contributes for the young people to enrol at technical programmes with the intention to continue the education. Strong economy can make the low qualifications attractive, but weak economy negatively affects their attractiveness among the young people, regardless of their gender.

76. There is one more phenomenon that contributes to getting the wrong picture of the young people's interest about the vocational education, regardless of their gender. For example, young people from both genders in smaller settlements do not have the opportunity to choose between gymnasium and vocational education or to choose vocational school according to their interest since in that settlement there is one type of vocational education only. These pupils can choose to travel or to stay in another place where there is a secondary school responding to their interests. In conditions of reduced financial power of the families, largest number of these young people decides to use the services of the school in their surrounding regardless of the fact that it is not their real interest. Such phenomenon adversely effects the transition of pupils to the higher education.

77. Most often these pupils perform selection of study programmes that do not correspond to the character of the secondary education they completed, but reflect their real interest to study. In the research conducted, part of the students and unemployed pupils confirmed the stated conclusion by their statements. Besides the positive measures undertaken to overcome this phenomenon (free transport, free text books, accommodation in dormitories, scholarships etc.) it is still present in the country. This actualizes the issue of the character in the secondary schools in the smaller towns in the country and the programmes accumulating low number of pupils.

78. In the direction of enrolment higher number of pupils in the vocational schools, the vocational schools themselves promote the offered vocations and profiles to the pupils in the last years of study in elementary schools and promote the future benefits of the selected vocation. With the purpose of enrolling male/female pupils in all vocations, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) does not allow reduction of the pupils' quota for enrolment in gymnasium education, health care and economic and legal and commercial vocation in which female pupils are enrolled the most. In this manner, MES encourages the female pupils to enrol in technical schools.

79. Good example is the enrolment of female pupils at SSCS Mihajlo Pupin Skopje at the electro-technical vocation which is known as typically "male occupation".

Employment

80. According to the data obtained from the research titled "Women on the Labour Market: Stereotypes and Challenges", in organization of FINANCE THINK, the Economic Research and Policy Institute Skopje, the main reasons of inactivity are the following: 34.5 per cent of women declared that the main reason of their inactivity is the household obligations and the care of children and elderly people. 17.4 per cent declared that they have health issues that prevent them to work or to seek for a job. Other two large categories are those who have lost their hope to find a job (declared by 16.3 per cent) and those who responded that they have never worked and believe that insufficiently qualified. However, these categories of inactive women who declare discouragement of job seeking should be a target of the public policies aiming at increasing the participation of women on the labour market. Undeveloped flexible forms of work and the distance of the workplace from home have very low significance. Contrary to the widespread beliefs, money that women receive from abroad is identified by only 3.3 per cent as a reason for inactivity.

Relative importance for any potential obstacle for activity

81. The most of the interviewed (60.3 per cent) agreed that the household obligations (including the care for children) are main obstacle of their activity. However, many women (55 per cent) say they believe they do not have the appropriate skills to qualify. Half of the inactive women agree that the lack of flexible work opportunities is moving them away from the labour market, while 45 per cent complained about the lack of facilities that provide care for children.

Conservative views of the inactive women

82. The study shows that inactive women have traditional views of gender roles that act as an important barrier to their labour market activity.

83. The 2012 Law on Minimum Monthly Wages determined the amount of the minimum monthly wage as well as the other issues related to the minimum monthly wage. The minimum monthly wage is the lowest monthly amount of the basic monthly wage that the employer is obliged to pay to the employee for work performed for full time and fulfilled normalized performance. The normalized performance is determined by the employer, each year in February, based on the criteria and efficiency of the production process. The normalized performance is determined by the employer in cooperation with the employees, on the basis of criteria that must be the same for each technical and technological whole at the employer. The normalized performance as a condition for payment of the minimum monthly wage should be achievable by at least 80 per cent of the number of employees for each technical-technological unit, separately. Right to minimum monthly wage have all workers at the amount determined by law. The amount of the minimum wage for a part-time worker or worker working less than full-time working hours, is calculated and paid in proportion to the number of hours worked. Minimum monthly wage does not apply to the employed persons solely. Pursuant to the 2012 Law on Minimum Monthly Wage, the minimum monthly wage amounted 8,050 in net amount for all employees except for the employees at departments in which in July 2011 there was an average monthly wage paid under 15,600 denars in gross amount. Pursuant to this law, the minimum monthly wage in the sectors of shoe, leather and textile industry was paid below the level of the minimum monthly wage.

84. The amendments to the 2017 Law on Minimum Monthly Wage contributed to increase in the minimum monthly wage to 17,130 in gross amount and is paid with no exception in all sectors, including the sectors of shoe, leather and textile industry. Pursuant to the amendments to the 2017 Law on Minimum Monthly Wage, a financial

assistance from the budget of Republic of Macedonia is being foreseen for payment of minimum monthly wage to employers that fulfil the requirements determined by the Law. Financial assistance's amount for payment of minimum monthly wage amounts 500–2000 denars. Pursuant to this law, the financial assistance of 500–2000 denars shall be paid from September 2017 to March 2018, while from March 2018 to August 2018, it will be paid in the amount of 50 per cent from the previously determined amount.

85. Article 108 of the Law on Labour Relations (Official Gazette 74/2015) stipulates the equal pay for women and men.

Health care

86. The working group established within the Ministry of Health has prepared a number of guidelines related to prenatal health care, including Guidelines for management of postpartum haemorrhage, detection of risky conditions in pregnancy, etc. The guideline is presented to the association of gynaecologists, it was approved and it is planned its implementation to start soon.

87. The health care of women in the reproductive period is provided through a network of health facilities at all three levels of health care. On primary level, prenatal health care in Republic of Macedonia is provided by gynaecologists, as well as by patronage nurses. Primary health care for pregnant women is carried out by gynaecologists and in 2016 a total of 141 doctors, or 1 doctor for about 3600 women, in the reproductive period worked in the public sector. The percentage of pregnant women who have access and use prenatal and postnatal care is relatively high and ranges around 90 per cent.

88. The deliveries with professional help are maintained at a high level (99.9 per cent).

89. The patronage service conducts patronage visits to the maternity home after leaving the maternity hospital. The number of pregnant women who have access and use postnatal health protection (visits from patronage nurses) amounts 83 per cent.

90. The Ministry of Health has introduced several measures to increase access to health care for pregnant women, especially to vulnerable groups of women experiencing financial barriers, that is, free examinations are provided during laboratory examinations during pregnancy, related to pregnancy, free childbirth for pregnant uninsured women, Roma women, women from socially vulnerable categories and persons without identification and free hospital treatment of infants from uninsured mothers, Roma women, women from socially vulnerable categories and persons without identification, while the pregnant women who have health insurance are exempt from paying for health services related to pregnancy, at all levels of health care. In 2015, the co-payment for health-care services during pregnancy was abolished (microbiological smears, laboratory blood and urine examinations, urine culture, PRISCA test for the detection of genetic anomalies), while the costs are covered by the annual programmes conducted by the Ministry of Health: the Co Payment Programme of the MH (for insured women) and Mother and Child Programme (for uninsured women). This measure facilitates the access to these services of the vulnerable groups of women.

91. Health care for children aged 0–6 is provided by the preventive teams (monitoring of growth and development and protection against communicable diseases) and patronage services (support to families with young children for health promotion). The health care and treatment of sick children is carried out through the work of the general practitioners/paediatricians as well as the paediatric departments

within the hospital treatment. In 2016, the prevention teams conducted an average number of 2.8 examinations per infant.

92. The patronage service with patronage visits covered 80 per cent of the new-borns with an average of 2.2 visits per new-born and 4.5 visits per infant.

93. For the purpose of protection against infectious diseases in Republic of Macedonia, compulsory immunoprophylaxis and chemoprophylaxis is carried out in accordance with the Law on Protection of the Population against Infectious Diseases[7] and the Rulebook for Immunological Prophylaxis, Chemoprophylaxis, [8] Persons Subject to These Measures, the Manner of Performing and Keeping Records and Documentation).

Table

Percentage of children 1 year of age who received full immunization for tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio and measles

Vaccine year	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*
Diphtheria	95.9	94.7	98.2	95.4	91.3	95.3
Tetanus	95.9	94.7	98.2	95.4	91.3	95.3
Pertussis	95.9	94.7	98.2	95.4	97.3	95.3
Polio	97.0	96.9	97.9	95.6	92.1	95.3
Smallpox	96.8	96.1	96.1	93.3	88.8	82.1

Source: Institute for Public Health of Republic of Macedonia.

94. Within the Early Cancer Detection Programme, screening of women at the age between 24 and 60 is organized.

95. All gynaecologists (who have contracts with the Health Insurance Fund) are engaged in screening for early detection of cervical cancer. They are obliged to send invitations to women to be screened. Functioning of the mobile gynaecological unit is foreseen, especially for the rural areas where the most vulnerable population (unemployed, low educated, without health insurance, Roma, etc.) live. The activity is carried out by health institutions in cooperation with NGOs. The Institute for Public Health has produced educational material for motivating women to be involved in screening. IPH regularly prepares quarterly and annual reports and submits them to the Ministry of Health.

96. A working works on preparation of Clinical Guidelines for Screening Prevention of Cervical Cancer.

97. A special electronic registration form for the PAP smear has been prepared. The same will be operational after the protocol is finalized.

98. There are no gender-specific drug addiction treatment programmes in the country, women are treated in gender mixed programs that do not meet their needs. The number of female patients in the programmes is very low, up to 15 per cent of the total number of patients in the capital Skopje, while in some other cities this percentage is lower.

99. Pregnant women have always had treatment priority and there have never existed waiting lists for them.

[7] (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No. 66/04, 139/08, 99/09, 149/14, 150/15 and 37/16).

[8] (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No. 177/15).

100. In the manual with the protocol for use of methadone in the treatment of opioid addiction, women are recognized as a separate vulnerable category and it contains the chapters:

Use of methadone during pregnancy, where it is stated

101. Substitution maintenance therapies are well established for use in pregnancy and result in a general improvement in the physical and psychosocial well-being of mothers and a better outcome for their babies. Buprenorphine is associated with a lower incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome compared to methadone. Therefore, opioid addicted pregnant women can be treated with methadone during the first three months of pregnancy. If a decision is made to initiate methadone therapy during pregnancy, detoxification programmes and discontinuation of methadone therapy are not recommended due to the risk of adverse effects of abstinence syndrome on the foetus and on the course of pregnancy, but a stable maintenance of the daily methadone dose in the course of the entire pregnancy.

New-borns of opioid addicted mothers, where it is stated

102. "For more information, see a new-born infant's guide to opioid addicted mothers". In 2011, a Clinical Guideline for the Management of Children with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome was developed by a psychiatrist and paediatrician-neonatologist.

103. In most NGOs in several cities in the country there are specific programmes to reduce damage to sex workers who inject drugs. Most of these programmes offer medical and social services, legal assistance, and representation of a court in cases of violation of human rights.

104. In 2017 an assessment was made of treatment and care programs for drug users in which there are addressed, among others, all the challenges and recommendations related to gender issues in the drug-using population, and the evaluation report is available on the MH's website.

105. It is planned this year to draft a new law on termination of pregnancy taking into account the opinions and conclusions of the Human Rights Committee. The process is conducted transparently in coordination and communication with the non-governmental sector in order to provide appropriate solutions.

106. According to the programme of the Government of Republic of Macedonia, it is planned that at least one type of oral contraception should be placed on the positive list in the period of this Government's mandate.

107. According to the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–2020, the introduction of comprehensive sexuality education is envisaged.

Rural women

108. The formal employment of women in agriculture, forestry and water economy is 20.3 per cent of the total number of employed women in Republic of Macedonia, and according to the data for unpaid family workers — 64 per cent are women. Inequality in employment is most often the result of informal workforce, lack of land and/or ownership, traditional norms in rural areas and limited support for rural women in accessing resources (information, advisory services, subsidies, finance and skill development).

109. Reforms in education, legal regulation reforms and raising public awareness among women, starting with the education of young people from the youngest age, the role of notaries in realizing the transfer of real estate rights and increasing the

information of the contracting parties, by gradually overcoming the tradition/customs with the legal norms, result in an increase in the percentage of women enrolled as owners of real estate in Republic of Macedonia. For comparison, in Republic of Macedonia, the percentage of women enrolled as real estate owners from 16.63 per cent in 2015 has increased, and now it amounts 28.33 per cent.

Refugee women

110. The Law on International and Temporary Protection (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No. 61 dated 11.04.2018) in its provisions regulates the gender-sensitive procedures in determining the status of refugee or of person with status of subsidiary protection.

111. Namely, Article 6 line 1 of this Law, in acts of persecution according to Art. 1 A of the Geneva Convention regulates these issues by defining:

- Acts of physical or mental violence, including acts of sexual violence;
- Acts that by their nature are tied to gender or children.

112. At the same time in Article 7, in the section on reasons for persecution, the term "group" is defined, as well as the term "social group". Depending on the circumstances of the country of origin, a social group may also mean a group that is based on sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is not considered a crime punishable under the national law. Gender-related elements that include gender identity should be considered when determining a membership or characteristic of a particular social group.

113. The article on vulnerable persons as a category of persons provided for in this Law regulates gender violence and it reads as follows: "It is necessary to take into account the forms of gender-specific persecution in evaluating the application for recognition of the right to asylum."

114. The Asylum Sector has two women counsellors who are responsible for dealing with a vulnerable category of persons, since the gender-based violence as a harmful act against the will of a person based on socially prescribed differences between men and women includes physical, sexual or mental injury or suffering, threats of that kind, coercion and deprivation of liberty.

115. Regarding the reception of women refugees and asylum seekers, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy manages the only acceptance Centre in the country, the Public Institution for Admission of Asylum Seekers, located in Vizbegovo. In June 2016, the Ministry developed standard operational procedures for prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV) for the receiving facility, while in May 2017 SOP for the Reception Centre was integrated besides GBV, the entire mechanism for referral of vulnerable asylum seekers. Social workers are available 24/7 and have attended various trainings to provide protection and case management in relation to vulnerable individuals or to assess and profile the potential victims of violence. In collaboration with the UN agencies and partner NGOs, there are specific psycho-social programmes and assistance provided through various activities and group sessions.

116. In terms of transit Centres, through its social security workers, the ministry provides assistance and support to all migrants registered there by the police. Regarding women and girls, for the needs of transit Centres, the Ministry developed internal guidelines and a referral protocol for all vulnerable migrants and the identification of a victim of violence or human trafficking. In partnership with the UN agencies and the NGOs, transit Centres are used to offer specific psychosocial

programmes and group support, but with the reduction in the number of users, activities are also taking place with lower dynamics.

Disadvantaged groups of women

117. According to the 2014–2020 Strategy for Roma in Republic of Macedonia and the 2016–2020 National Action Plan for Strengthening the Position of the Roma Women in the Society, the following projects are implemented.

Project Inclusion of Children in Preschool Education

118. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund (REF) for eleven years implements the project Inclusion of Roma Children in the Public Municipal Institutions — Kindergartens.

119. The total number of children enrolled at all kindergartens in Republic of Macedonia amounts 34,521, 718 or 2.07 per cent of who are Roma. Outside the project (parents who cover the stay of children in kindergarten at the level of Republic of Macedonia), there are 204 children registered in total.

120. During the school year 2017–2018, a total of 510 children in the 19 kindergartens/municipalities were enrolled from the 628 planned for that period. In total 19 municipalities, 260 of them are girls. On average, the regular attendance of children in the kindergarten is about 65 per cent. According to the project statistics, the drop of children in kindergartens is on average 3.45 per cent, with higher outflows in male children of 3.32 per cent, while the outflow among the girls is 2.69 per cent. All children attending kindergarten have been regularly vaccinated.

121. Within this project, besides the obligations undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, administratively and financially, the kindergartens and 19 municipalities also support stay for a number of Roma children in kindergartens, for which they sign an agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Project Roma Information Centres

122. Currently, 12 Roma Information Centres are operating in 12 municipalities and 16 persons are engaged in the same, 5 of who are female. Roma Information Centres work on field, for timely information, counselling, referral and providing logistical support to the citizens in order to achieve their rights and obligations (in the areas of social protection, employment, health care, housing and education, obtaining personal documents, etc.), in a timely manner without particular problems and consequences. In the period from January to March 2018, 2354 services were provided, 46.5 per cent or 1095 services were targeted at women who addressed the RIC (in the areas of employment 92 services, social protection 626, 53 in the field of health care, in the area of education 67, housing 85, anti-discrimination 2, personal documentation 108, other 62).

Action for Registration of People in the Register of Births

123. According to the latest data, about 600 Roma face the problem of non-registration in the register of births and cannot exercise any of the rights provided by the laws in Republic of Macedonia. Within this activity, the main target is the Roma women and mothers whose children are not registered in the register of births.

124. From April 1st, the Office for Management of Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths published an Announcement inviting all persons who are not registered in the register of births to submit requests to the Officer for additional registration, thus Macedonia will have official figures for these persons recorded in a separate Register and at the same time will have an insight on what kind of cases it is about.

ROMAACTED

125. The new project ROMAACTED implemented in Republic of Macedonia will be founded by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The Council of Europe in cooperation with the European Commission has selected the coaches from this programme and an NGO that will coordinate the activities. In the formation of local structures, Roma women and their inclusion is of particular importance.

Measures for Temporarily Taking Care of the Persons Caught under Kale

126. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, acting on the conclusion of the Draft Minutes of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Government of Republic of Macedonia held on 5.10.2017, in relation to the obligation to accommodate the persons found under Kale in a social protection institution, undertakes measures through the PI Inter-Municipal Centre for Social Work of the City of Skopje for urgent and temporary accommodation in a facility in Skopje, which is under the authority of the Ministry. By the end of November 2017, 112 people were relocated from the place called POD KALE and placed in institutions that are under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Workshops are organized with the Roma women in the families and it is worked on raising their awareness. Of the 94 persons who are temporarily taken care of at the facility in Ranka Milanovikj, 53 are children (male 31, female 22), while 41 adults (21 male, 20 female).

Social Mapping

127. From April 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy started with the implementation of a new Social Mapping Project funded by the European Commission. This project will map the Roma settlements and provide qualitative and quantitative data to Roma people in the areas of education, employment, housing, health care, social inclusion, possession of documents and the like.

128. The Employment Service Agency of Republic of Macedonia have registered 6202 unemployed Roma who are active job-seekers, out of which 2324 women. The qualification structure of a large proportion of these persons is disadvantageous in relation to the needs and demands of employers, which actually reduces their employment opportunities, while the low level of education makes it difficult for many people to include them in some of the programmes and active measures for employment and successful management of the labour market.

129. Within the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Cabinet of the Minister without Portfolio, Mr. Aksel Ahmedovski, a Rulebook and criteria for allocation of projects for the municipalities were prepared, which would be financed from the national budget in the field of infrastructure. From this year, the budget of funds planned for this purpose has been increased.

130. Regarding the issue of housing locations, i.e. construction of housing facilities for socially vulnerable groups in the municipality of Shuto Orizari-Skopje, according to the F/P 1674 (2009) Project for Housing of Socially Vulnerable Groups, it is planned to build 51 apartments in two facilities, it is expected that the Municipality of Shuto Orizari will adopt the Detailed Urban Plan, which should be prepared as soon as possible by the Spatial Planning Agency of Republic of Macedonia.

131. The Ministry of Health continued with the implementation of the Roma Health Mediators Project (RHM).

132. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, within the framework of the information for overcoming the problem of non-registration in register of births,

proposed the preparation of a Health Care Program for these people with a special focus on Roma woman.

Marriage and family relations

133. Article 16 of the Family Law (Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia No. 80/92, 9/96, 38/04, 33/06, 84/08, 67/10, 156/10, 39/12, 44/12, 8/14, 115/14, 104/15 and 150/15) determines the age of entering into matrimony as marital obstacle where it does not allow for person under the age of 18 to enter into marriage. The same provision provides for an exemption so that the competent court can, in an out-of-court procedure, allow the marriage of a person who has reached the age of 16 if it determines that it has reached the physical and mental maturity required to perform the rights and obligations arising in marriage, after obtaining an opinion from a health institution and providing expert assistance in the Centre for social work. In the procedure for issuing a decision for granting permission for marriage, the court will hear the minor submitter of the motion, their parents, the guardian and the person to whom the minor person wants to marry.

134. The Centres for Social Work, when performing the activities within their scope, monitor the situation in the vulnerable families and undertake measures for preventing juvenile marriages through professional-methodological work with the parents and minors, as well as by indicating the consequences in the case of juvenile marriages, in order to prevent certain negative phenomena, to strengthen parental competencies and provide expert assistance to overcome broken partnerships and parental relationships in the family.

135. The SWC, as an exclusively competent body for guardianship, supervises the exercise of the parental right, and in case the parent abuses or neglects the parental right, it undertakes appropriate measures for protection of the person, the rights and the interests of the child (it may take the child away, place it in another family, institution or procedure for deprivation of parental right) their education, employment and health.